

The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Jacob Lew, Director
Office of Management and Budget
1650 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Secretary Salazar and Director Lew:

We write regarding pending federal regulations to guide the management of Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) use at Cape Hatteras National Seashore, in Dare County, North Carolina. Given the expected impact of these regulations on the Dare County economy and communities throughout North Carolina's Outer Banks, we ask that you ensure that any final management strategy will maximize public access to the extent permissible under law.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore was authorized as the nation's first national seashore in 1937, and has been managed by the National Park Service (NPS) since 1953. The beaches of Cape Hatteras are among the nation's best because they offer an opportunity for visitors to enjoy a natural landscape largely untouched by human development. To do so, park visitors use motorized vehicles to access many of the seashore's recreational areas.

Pursuant to Executive Orders 11644 and 11989, the NPS has worked in recent years to develop a rule to govern ORV use at Cape Hatteras. Most recently, the NPS concluded an environmental review of proposed alternatives, and has selected a

preferred approach to comply with resource protection requirements (FR Doc.2010–32549). We are concerned that this environmental impact analysis does not appear to reflect the input of local residents and businesses. However, this analysis will now serve as the basis for a management plan to implement the NPS findings.

An overly restrictive ORV management plan will further imperil the economic vitality of Dare County families and businesses already struggling under current management practices. North Carolina's coastal communities have long fought to maintain the natural landscape of our beaches, and have resisted the extensive development that is seen elsewhere in the country. These good intentions may be punished, however, should ORV regulations impose undue restrictions on beach access at Cape Hatteras. With this in mind, and with the NPS working with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to draft and review this rule, we urge you to provide as much public access to all Cape Hatteras Beaches as possible.

In particular, we ask that you provide additional access through the inclusion of ORV corridors that will allow access to all recreational areas open to ORV usage. Because Hatteras Island has an average width of only 1,500 feet, restrictions proposed by the NPS effectively close many areas in which there are no environmental concerns. For this reason, providing a means for the public to navigate through or around otherwise restricted areas to reach prime recreational opportunities will help to maximize responsible motorized access throughout the Seashore.

While we understand the unique challenges associated with managing ORV use at Cape Hatteras, we firmly believe the federal government is capable of providing a more appropriate balance between reasonable public access and environmental stewardship than what is contemplated under the Park Service analysis. We

thank you for your efforts to strike this balance. Should you need any further information, please contact Perrin Cooke in Senator Hagan's office, Margaret Brooks in Senator Burr's office, and Joshua Bowlen in Congressman Jones's office.

Thank you,

Senator Kay Hagan
Representative Walter Jones
Senator Richard Burr



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Hagan, Jones, Burr Team Up to Push for NC Public Beach Access

Tuesday, February 1, 2011

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Kay R. Hagan (D-NC), Representative Walter B. Jones (R-NC) and Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) are pushing for as much public access as possible on Hatteras beaches. The NC delegation members yesterday sent a letter to Department of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and OMB Director Jacob Lew asking that the proposed off-road vehicle management plan for Cape Hatteras National Seashore provide maximum public beach access. National Park Service officials have prepared a draft rule, which is currently under review prior to being released for public comment.

"Beach access is critical to the Dare County economy, and that is why I am working with Representative Jones and Senator Burr to make sure federal regulations are not overly restrictive for the local community," Hagan said. "The Hatteras community has experienced three summers with many beaches closed, and some local businesses may not survive another. I will continue working with the administration, my colleagues in Congress and all relevant stakeholders to balance appropriate beach access with important environmental protections."

"The public access restrictions in this proposal are unreasonably excessive and far more than what is necessary for adequate resource protection," said Jones. "This is a jobs issue. If the Administration is serious about job creation, it will revise this proposal."

In January, Hagan held "Conversations with Kay" in Dare County and talked with Outer Banks residents about their concerns with restrictive public access to North Carolina beaches. Also, Hagan has cosponsored the Preserving Public Access to Cape Hatteras Beaches Act, which would reinstate the Interim Management Plan for off-road vehicles at the Seashore.

Congressman Jones has been a longtime outspoken advocate for responsible motorized public access. In January of 2009, Jones introduced H.R. 718, legislation that would reinstate the Interim Management Strategy governing off-road vehicle use on Cape Hatteras National Seashore (CHNS).

To see the full text of the letter to the DOI and OMB click [here](#).



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